

PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PAEC)

Wednesday 7 February 2024 at 9:30am

via Microsoft Teams

Note of the 70th meeting of the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held via Microsoft Teams, at 9:30am on **7 February 2024**.

Present:

Dr Pdraig Walsh (Chairperson)
Ms Andrea Durnin
Ms Barbara Kelly
Dr Jim Murray
Dr John O'Connor
Ms Mary Grennan
Ms Órla Barry

In attendance:

Ms Therese Masterson
Ms Alex Keys
Ms Laura McNamee
Ms Michelle Gallagher
Mr Walter Balfe
Ms Yvonne Agnew
Dr Sharon Feeney (*Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee*)

The Chairperson welcomed Dr Sharon Feeney, a member of the Programmes and Award Oversight Committee as an observer at the meeting.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson enquired and confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to any of the items of business before the Committee.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 28 NOVEMBER 2023

2.1 The Minutes of the PAEC Meeting held on 28 November 2023 were approved by the Committee.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Any matters arising were covered within agenda items and were discussed during the meeting.

4. NOTE OF THE MEETING, REPORT FOR THE BOARD

4.1 Note of Meeting of 28 November 2023

The Committee APPROVED the Note of the PAEC Meeting of 28 November 2023 for publication on the QQI website.

4.2 Report for the Board on the PAEC meeting of 28 November 2023

The Committee NOTED the Report for the Board on the PAEC Meeting of 28 November 2023.

5. PROGRAMME VALIDATION APPLICATIONS

5.1 Further Education and Training (FET) Programmes

5.1.1 KARE

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.1.1.1 PG25516, Community Engagement and Learning, Level 3, Major Award, 60 FET Credits
CAS Award

5.1.2 Safetech Consulting & Training Ltd

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed reports presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.1.2.1 PG25575, Safety and Health at Work, Level 5, Minor Award, 15 FET credits
CAS Award

5.1.2.2 PG25576, Health & Safety Representation, Level 5, Minor Award, 15 FET credits
CAS Award

5.1.3 An Cosán

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificates of Validation:

5.1.3.1 PG25180, Women in Leadership, Level 6, Minor Award, 15 FET credits
CAS Award

5.1.4 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee agreed with the recommendation to REFUSE validation of one programme of one provider.

The decision to refuse validation will be referred to the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC) for confirmation or referral back to the PAEC.

5.1.5 Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed reports presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programmes below for five years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

- 5.1.5.1 PG25525, Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Volunteering for Community Engagement, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 15 FET Credits, non-CAS
- 5.1.5.2 PG25560, Level 3 Specific Purpose Certificate in Drugs and Alcohol Awareness, Level 3, Special Purpose Award, 5 FET Credits, non-CAS

5.2 Further Education and Training (FET) Programmes – Differential Validation

- 5.2.1 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to the Door Security Skills Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for *Louth and Meath ETB in July 2023*. Each was screened to ensure that there was only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Door Security Skills, Level 4 (10 FET credits), Special Purpose Award, CAS

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board** PG25688
- **Donegal Education and Training Board** PG25690
- **Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board** PG25705

- 5.2.2 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to the Security Guarding Skills, Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for *Louth and Meath ETB in July 2023*. Each was screened to ensure that there is only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Security Guarding Skills, Level 4 (10 FET credits), Special Purpose Award, CAS

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board** PG25668
- **Donegal Education and Training Board** PG25691
- **Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board** PG25728

- 5.2.3 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to the Certificate in Digital Assisted Eco Driving Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for *Waterford and Wexford ETB, and Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB in April 2021*. Each was screened to ensure that there is only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Specific Purpose Certificate in Digital Assisted Eco Driving, Level 5 (10 FET credits) Special Purpose Award, non-CAS

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board** PG25689
- **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board** PG25723
- **Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board** PG25730

5.2.4 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to Certificate in Digital Assisted Eco Driving (Coach and Bus), Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for Waterford and Wexford ETB, and Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB in June 2022. It was screened to ensure that there is only variation from that curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Digital Assisted Eco Driving (Coach and Bus), Level 5 (10 FET credits), Special Purpose Award, non-CAS

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board** PG25702
- **Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board** PG25733
- **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board** PG25724

5.2.5 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Specific Purpose Certificate in Using Robotics in Advanced Manufacturing, Level 6, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Louth and Meath ETB in July 2022*. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Using Robotics in Advanced Manufacturing, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 30 FET credits

Certificate in Fundamentals of Robotics, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals and Application, Level 6, Minor Award, 10 FET credits

Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals and Integration, Level 6, Minor Award, 10 FET credits

Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals and Robot Programming, Level 6, Minor Award, 15 FET credits

Certificate in Robotics Fundamentals, Developments and Trends, Level 6, Minor Award, 10 FET credits

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board**

PG25714, PG25715, PG25716, PG25717, PG25718, PG25719

5.2.6 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for

Cavan and Monaghan ETB in July 2023. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 5 FET Credits, non-CAS

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board** PG25704
- **Donegal Education and Training Board** PG25731
- **Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board** PG25732
- **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board** PG25725

5.2.7 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to the Specific Purpose Certificate in The Circular Economy in the Workplace, Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for *Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB in April 2023*. It was screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in The Circular Economy in the Workplace, Special Purpose Award (5 FET Credits)

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programme:

- **Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board** PG25710

5.2.8 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programme listed below was presented for validation to lead to the Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Digital Citizenship Special Purpose Award. The programme is based on a curriculum originally validated for *City of Dublin ETB in November 2023*. It was screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Certificate in Digital Citizenship, Level 4 (10 FET credits) Special Purpose Award, non-CAS

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programme:

- **Donegal Education and Training Board** PG25735

5.2.9 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated as. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for Sustainable Business, Level 5, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Limerick and Clare ETB in July 2023*. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for Sustainable Business, Level 5, Special Purpose Award, 15 FET Credits
Certificate in Lean Principles for Sustainable Business, Level 5, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

Certificate in Lean Tools for Sustainable Business, Level 5, Minor Award, 10 FET credits, Non-CAS

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board** PG25726, PG25739, PG25740

5.2.10 The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. As per the agreed procedure to facilitate differential validation of ETB programmes based on a shared curriculum, the programmes listed below were presented for validation to lead to the Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Business Innovation and Market Development, Special Purpose Award. The programmes are based on a curriculum originally validated for *Cavan and Monaghan ETB in December 2022*. They were screened to ensure that there is only variation from the curriculum in provider-specific aspects.

Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Business Innovation and Market Development, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 30 FET credits

Certificate in Business Idea Generation, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

Certificate in Business Idea Validation, Certificate in Business Idea Validation, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

Certificate in Market Exploration, Certificate in Market Exploration, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

Certificate in Customer Acquisition, Certificate in Customer Acquisition, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

Certificate in Market Development, Certificate in Market Development, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

Certificate in Customer Retention and Scaling, Certificate in Customer Retention and Scaling, Level 6, Minor Award, 5 FET credits

The Committee APPROVED the validation of the following programmes:

- **Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board**
PG25727, PG25741, PG25743, PG25744, PG25745, PG25746, PG25747

5.3 Higher Education and Training Programmes – Programme Validation

5.3.1 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee agreed with the recommendation to refuse validation of three programmes of one provider.

The decision to refuse validation will be referred to the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC) for confirmation or referral back to the PAEC.

5.3.2 A Named Provider

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee agreed with the recommendation to refuse validation of one programme of one provider.

The decision to refuse validation will be referred to the Programmes and Awards Oversight Committee (PAOC) for confirmation or referral back to the PAEC.

5.3.3 **Griffith College**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated and the detailed report presented. The Committee APPROVED the validation of the programme below for three years subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

5.3.3.1 PG25630, Certificate in Industrial Instrumentation Calibration, Level 6, Special Purpose Award, 5 Credits *Microcredential*

5.4 **Devolution of Responsibility for Validation Sub-Processes**

No Business

5.5 **Validation of Research Degree Programmes**

No Business

5.6 **Apprenticeship Programmes**

No Business

6. REVALIDATION

6.1 **Application for Extension of Validation Period**

6.1.1 **Galway Business School**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. Galway Business School requested a one-year extension of validation for the following programmes:

6.1.1.1 PG24154, Bachelor of Business, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG24155, Higher Certificate in Business, Level 6, Major Award, 120 Credits (Exit award)
PG24156, Certificate in Business Communications, Level 6, Minor Award, 20 Credits
PG24157, Certificate in Business and Entrepreneurship, Level 6, Minor Award, 20 Credits
PG24158, Certificate in Sales and Marketing, Level 6, Minor Award, 30 Credits
PG24159, Certificate in Marketing Management, Level 6, Minor Award, 30 Credits
PG24160, Certificate in Strategic Management, Level 7, Minor Award, 10 Credits

The rationale for this request was to allow time to engage with external academics and industry to research skill and competency gaps in programme content with recent academia and business developments.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date of the programme above to September 2024.

6.1.2 **IBAT College Dublin**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. IBAT College requested a one-year extension of validation for the following programmes:

- 6.1.2.1 PG24032, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG24033, Certificate in Arts in Business, Level 6, Minor Award, 60 Credits

The rationale for this request was as follows:

Following a recent addition to senior management within the college, and a visit to campus by QQI in October 2023, IBAT have further reflected on the initial draft version of the Review and Revalidation Terms of Reference as submitted and discussed with QQI in May 2023. This resulted in the requirement to seek an extension. IBAT College Dublin wish to extend the duration of the above programmes by one year to allow adequate time to ensure that the research undertaken for the revised programme is optimised as much as possible, with the resulting enhanced programme having solid underpinning from all stakeholders, particularly industry, learners, and staff.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date of the programmes to February 2025.

6.1.3 Kerry Education and Training Board

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. Kerry ETB requested a one-year extension of validation for the following programme:

- 6.1.3.1 PG24656, Advanced Certificate in Industrial Wind Turbine Engineering, Level 6, Major Award, 220 FET Credits (Apprenticeship)

The rationale for this request was as follows:

Kerry Education and Training Board indicated that they wished to extend the duration of the above programme by one year. The first intake of this programme was delayed by seven months taking place on 7 November 2022. The first cohort will complete their training in November 2025. This extension would allow the National Programme Board to conduct a comprehensive review of the 3-year apprenticeship and submit a revised programme through revalidation in Q4 2025.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date of the programmes to April 2025.

6.1.4 ICD Business School

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. ICD requested a one-year extension of validation for the following programmes:

- 6.1.4.1 PG24081, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits
PG24082, Master of Arts in Accounting and Finance, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits
PG24144, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies, Level 8, Major Award, 240 Credits

The rationale for this request was as follows:

ICD Business School indicated that they wished to extend the duration of the above programmes by one year to allow sufficient time to make adaptations and updates to the assessment, teaching and learning due to the increased usage of artificial intelligence. ICD Business School are also engaging with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, regarding the programmes and the possibility of

ACCA accreditation. The above, along with other matters, require a comprehensive overhaul of the three programmes in 2024. If validation was extended until August 2025, then both QQI validation and the professional bodies accreditation would be aligned going forward for the next five years. This would allow ICD Business School to deliver programmes that are academically relevant and also professionally accredited programmes that give the graduate exemptions and a specific career pathway.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date of the programmes to August 2025.

6.1.5 **Carlow College, St. Patrick's**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. Carlow College requested a one-year extension of validation for the following programme:

6.1.5.1 PG23981, Master of Arts (Leadership in Therapeutic Child and Social Care), Level 9, Major Awards, 90 Credits

The rationale for this request was as follows:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme has had only two cohorts start and complete the programme: one cohort pre the COVID-19 pandemic and one post the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, no intake took place for the academic year 2023/2024, as teaching staff involved in this programme retired at the end of the academic year 2022/2023. They wished to extend the duration of the above programme for an additional year to allow the new teaching staff involved time to review and make informed changes to the revised programme. Carlow College are also undergoing the review and revalidation of six undergraduate programmes currently, panel meetings scheduled in March 2024.

The Committee APPROVED the request to extend the last intake date of the programmes to September 2024.

6.2 **Applications for Revalidation**

6.2.1 **Griffith College**

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated. The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the following programme for five years, subject to any special conditions of validation, and all the conditions from the current validation policy listed in the proposed Certificate of Validation:

6.2.1.1 PG25703, Bachelor of Arts in Pharmaceutical Business Operations, Level 7, Major Award, 60 Credits

6.2.1.2 PG25712, Master of Arts in Journalism and Digital Communications, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits

PG25722, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Journalism and Digital Communications, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits

PG25709, Master of Arts in Public Relations and Digital Communications, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits

PG25720, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Public Relations and Digital Communications, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits

PG25711, Master of Arts in Digital Communications: Podcasting and Video, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits

PG25713, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Digital Communications: Podcasting & Video, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits

PG25706, Bachelor of Arts in Communications, Level 7, Major Award, 180 Credits

PG25707, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communications and Media Production, Level 8, Major Award, 180 Credits

The Committee APPROVED the revalidation of the above programmes.

6.3 Request for Modification of Validated Programmes

6.3.1 CCT College

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

CCT requested modifications to the two validated programmes below. The validated programmes have a last intake date of August 2027. Following the first year of implementation of these programmes, the recommended change proposed by the programme team at the October 2023 programme board was to move the module *Research Methods & Professionalism* (currently semester one) to semester two, and to move a technical module, *Risk Management*, to semester one.

The rationale for the change is to allow students more time to familiarise themselves with the programme content so that they are better placed to make an informed decision around their preferred research project.

6.3.1.1 PG24629, Master of Arts in International Business, Level 9, Major Award, 90 Credits

PG24630, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in International Business, Level 9, Major Award, 60 Credits

The Committee APPROVED the modifications to the programmes as requested by Griffith College.

7. FOLLOW-UP ON PAEC RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS IN PANEL REPORTS

7.1 Update on the follow-up of conditions of validation

As part of its internal quality assurance procedures, the executive is required to follow up on any Conditions of Validation imposed by the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee.

7.1.1 ECAC

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

At the December 2022 PAEC meeting, QQI validated, with one outstanding condition, the following programmes from ECAC:

PG25053 – Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Fgas Handling-RACHPTT Systems Category 1

PG25171 – Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Fgas Handling-RACHPTT Systems Category II

On 4 December 2023, ECAC submitted a response to address the outstanding condition. The executive received and reviewed the response from ECAC and considers that the outstanding condition of validation has been met and that no further follow-up is required.

The Committee NOTED that the executive now considers the condition to be met and that no further follow-up is required.

7.2 Update on the follow-up of conditions of QA Approval

No Business

8. QA FOR COLLABORATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL PROVISION

No Business

9. APPROVAL OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR LEGACY PROVIDERS (RE-ENGAGEMENT)

9.1 Exchange House Ireland National Travellers Service

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of Exchange House Ireland National Travellers Service.

9.2 Brothers of Charity Services Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Brothers of Charity Services Ireland.

9.3 Dublin 8 Community Education Centre

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Dublin 8 Community Education Centre.

9.4 Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed.

9.5 Festina Lente Foundation CLG

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Festina Lente Foundation CLG.

9.6 Youth Theatre Ireland

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Youth Theatre Ireland.

9.7 Ability West – St Joseph’s Training Centre

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS the quality assurance procedures of Ability West – St Joseph’s Training Centre.

9.8 COPE Foundation

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of COPE Foundation.

9.9 St. Colman’s Training Centre

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

The Committee APPROVED the quality assurance procedures of St. Colman’s Training Centre.

10. ROUTINE STANDARDS ACTIVITIES UPDATE

No Business

11. CHANGE OF STATUS OF LEGACY HET AND FET PROVIDERS

No Business

12. REPORT FROM THE PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PAOC)

No Business

13. PROPOSAL FOR PROCESS TO EXTEND APPROVED SCOPE OF PROVISION TO INCLUDE BLENDED AND/OR ONLINE PROGRAMMES

13.1 Proposal for Process to Extend Approved Scope of Provision to Include Blended and/or Online Programme

The Committee NOTED the documentation circulated.

QQI has published new statutory QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes. Providers who wish to have their approved scope of provision to include into these modalities need to have their QA procedures approved by QQI. Given the scale of this task and the level of demand from providers, it is important that this be a planned and meaningful process but proportionate to risk and cognisant of provider

context. In order to design the process with these factors in mind, a survey was carried out to identify more precisely what would be involved i.e. how many providers want to avail of the new modalities and to what extent. The data was very useful and underpins the proposal for a process (implementation plan) which was included in the documentation for the meeting.

The principles underpinning the proposed process are as follows:

- Governance – the PAEC would oversee the process and be the decision-making point.
- Substantiveness – the process should result in potentially effective QA of blended and fully online programmes.
- Subsidiarity – the process should ensure that provider-based QA and governance established through reengagement and otherwise is leveraged to evaluate and endorse providers' QA procedure prior to submission to QQI.
- Proportionality – the level of scrutiny and evaluation to be in keeping with the proposed extension and provider capacity and context.

Following discussion, the Committee approved the proposal for a process to extend approved scope of provision to include blended and/or online programmes.

14. SOLAS - UPDATE REPORT ON APPRENTICESHIP

14.1 SOLAS - Update Report on Apprenticeship

The Committee NOTED the SOLAS update report circulated.

It outlined the following actions:

- Discontinuance of older versions of trades: SOLAS note QQI concerns around ongoing certification, which QQI plan to cease issuing from autumn 2024. They state that they will outline their plans re discontinuance of old awards by the end of Q1 2024. They are considering bridging programmes to cover and measure the revised learning outcomes, or the opportunity to enrol apprentices on the newer version of the programme.
- Whilst SOLAS are continuing to focus on the apprenticeship backlog issue, the demand of resources to do so has reduced, meaning that they state that they are now in a position to provide appropriate focus on the validation/re-validation project. They indicated that they are committed to progressing this work at a pace which is both operationally realistic and satisfactory to QQI.
- Re backlog and move to accelerated programmes – SOLAS state that they are in discussions with their delivery and industry partners around the accelerated approach in the trade of Pipefitting. Work in this area is ongoing and practicalities are being worked on. Key to these discussions is the integrity of the programme and assessment processes. It is their intention to present QQI with a paper around how this accelerated approach will operate and how this will satisfy the requirements of the curriculum and learning outcomes.
- SOLAS and The National Apprenticeship Office are finalising an initial draft plan for integration of apprenticeship and a move towards a consortium-led model. They have been tasked with producing a detailed plan for Ministerial and Governmental approval by the end of March 2024. This will include a programme of work to be completed and a projected timeline for implementation.
- The Review and Revalidation table SOLAS forwarded (which was based on the plan agreed with QQI in 2022) sets out the SOLAS programme of work for progressing revalidation, which they state will take place prior to the programmes being relocated to their new coordinating providers.

- SOLAS commits to communicate progress on the Review and Revalidation work and proposes setting a date for a progress review meeting. They are happy to be led by QQI on setting a suitable timeframe to do so.

15. A Named Provider's process for advanced entry into its degree programmes

The Team noted the paper tabled at the meeting regarding an issue in a named provider. The issue related to the provider's process for advanced entry into its degree programmes.

This proposal outlined how QQI would act in the case of the provider's process for advanced entry into its degree programmes.

The justification for action would be (i) concern about very accelerated achievement of degrees by part-time students and (ii) regulatory environment for one of the degrees.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that a review of the provider should be conducted. QQI will direct the provider to suspend the practice of advanced entry to HE programmes pending the completion of this process.